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HEARS PILOT IS ALIVE

Family Sheds Tears of Joy

By JERRY O'LEARY, Jr.

Staff Writer

The parents and five sisters of Francis G. Powers burst into tears of happiness today as their home in Mill Creek, Va., when they learned the American pilot was safe and sound somewhere in Russia.

"Thank God! That's what we've been hoping for," said father, Oliver W. Powers, a woodworker in mountainous Shenandoah County, Va., about 350 miles from Washington.

The 30-year-old pilot's mother, who is suffering from heart condition, cried along with the rest of the family when word first reached them that Soviet Premier Khrushchev said their son was still alive.

Word of Mr. Khrushchev's announcement that her brother had been rescued being on an intelligence mission, a sister, Joyce Powers, 29, said:

"That's just not true. It's not possible."

Planned by Charge

The said the family was stunned by the Russian charges against the suggestion from the Soviet leader that her brother might be tried as a spy.

Another sister, Mrs. Janice Melvin, 37, 1804 Nelson drive, Church, Va., said word of Mr. Khrushchev's announcement about her brother came from the New York Times at 11:43 a.m. today.

"None of us were sleepy," Mrs. Melvin told The Star. "We were too upset for that. All of us thought he was dead and we were hoping against hope."

Mrs. Melvin, wife of an American Oil Co. employee, said her family has received no official word that Mr. Powers is alive and any government aide.

Phone Call Planned

"We'll call them today to see if it's possible for us to make a telephone call through to them in Russia," said Mrs. Melvin.

The five daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Powers were gathered at their parents' home at Mill Creek, between Pound and



Francis G. Powers, the American pilot presumed shot down over Russia and now reported to be alive, and his wife, Barbara, who is in Turkey, where her husband was stationed. — AP Wirephoto.

Clinton, Va., when they were told the family's only son was safe.

A second daughter from the Washington area is Mrs. Jessica Hileman of 318 Audrey Lane, Glassmanor, Md. Her husband, William, is a "circula-

tion time" member of the Washington Daily News.

Mrs. Hileman, 31, is with their parents in Mill Creek. Her husband, Mr. William Hileman, is in Turkey, where he has been stationed with his wife for the past four years.

Mr. Hileman said Mr. Powers' wife Barbara is a native of Albany, Ga. The couple has been married about five years, he said.

Mrs. Melvin said her brother had been in the Air Force but left that service more than four years ago.

The pilot was born August 17, 1929, at Jenkins, Ky., but had lived most of his life in Columbus, Ga., and south-western Virginia. His father owns the Norton Shoe Shop in Norton, Va.

As a youth, they said, he was athletically inclined, playing football at Grundy (Va.) High School and participating in track, later on. He ran the 440-yard dash and the 880-yard run at Milligan College, Johnson City, Tenn., from where he was graduated in 1950. He took part in the Penn Relays one year.

Loved to Fly

They said he also was an accomplished swimmer and had been a lifeguard. Francis loved to fly, his family said, since the age of 14 when he took his first plane ride at Princeton, W. Va.

"Flying always meant everything to that boy," his father said.

The pilot's mother has been taking his loss hard, his father said. "She heard all about his being shot down on the radio. We couldn't keep it from her."

"In the 10 years he's been flying, most of it has been alone. Only a few times has there been anyone else in the plane."

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